

THE FIRST MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE EXPLORATION OF THE SEA.

AT the conference which was held at Stockholm in June, 1899, having for its object the promotion of international cooperation in studying the physical and biological conditions of the seas bordering Europe, programmes were discussed and formulated, which were revised at the second conference, held in Christiania, in May, 1901, when a scheme for the coordination of the proposed work was provisionally agreed to. This scheme contemplated the creation of an International Council nominated by the Governments of the countries interested, which should meet periodically and organise and direct the proposed work, utilising for this purpose funds to be placed at its disposal by the Governments in question.

The question having been considered by all the maritime countries of northern Europe, all except France decided to participate, in most cases, however, for a few years only, and with conditions limiting the application of the funds which were voted to researches likely to produce practical results beneficial to fisheries at an early date.

The first meeting of the International Council took place in Copenhagen on July 22, when the following delegates and experts took part:—Great Britain, Sir Colin Scott Moncrieff and Prof. D'Arcy Thompson, with Dr. H. R. Mill and Mr. W. Garstang as experts; Denmark, Captain Drechsel and Dr. M. Knudsen, with Dr. C. G. J. Petersen and Dr. Ostenfeld as experts; Holland, Dr. P. P. C. Hoek; Finland, Prof. Hönén and Dr. Nordqvist; Germany, Dr. Herwig and Prof. Krümmel; Norway, Prof. F. Nansen and Dr. J. Hjort, with Mr. Schweigaard as secretary; Russia, Dr. Knipovich; Sweden, Prof. O. Pettersson and Dr. Trybom, with Prof. P. T. Cleve as expert. The Council was received at the opening meeting by the Prime Minister, M. Deuntzer, who welcomed the delegates to Copenhagen and explained that the Belgian Government, while not sending a delegate on this occasion, had not dissociated itself from the work. The King of Denmark received the delegates on a later occasion, and the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture gave dinners in their honour. The meetings took place in the Foreign Office, and every possible facility was afforded for carrying out the work for which the Council had assembled.

At the first sitting the Council was constituted. Dr. Herwig, of Hanover, the head of the German Sea-Fisheries Association, was elected president; Dr. Otto Pettersson, of Stockholm, vice-president; and Dr. P. P. C. Hoek, of The Helder, in Holland, was appointed general secretary, in accordance with the suggestions of the Christiania conference.

The second sitting was occupied in discussions as to the management of the business of the Council, and two committees, each consisting of one delegate from each country represented, were appointed to draw up definite proposals as to the oceanographical and biological work of the Council. The third sitting received the reports of these committees and adopted them after discussion.

The scheme of biological work has been considerably modified on account of the conditions imposed by most of the Governments in giving funds for the international cooperation. Practical results of direct value to the fisheries are sought for, and the money has been given definitely for that purpose, thus preventing the institution of researches of a purely scientific aim the results from which might not directly and rapidly lead to the benefit of fisheries.

It was decided to undertake at once the systematic study of two problems of immediate practical importance—the migrations of the most important food-fishes of the North Sea, especially the cod and herring; and the

question of over-fishing in those parts of the North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat most frequented by trawlers, with special reference to the plaice, the sole and other flatfish, and to the haddock. Each problem is to be studied by international observations directed by an international committee under a chairman or convener nominated by the Council. The committee on fish migration consists of one representative each of Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, and two of Great Britain (for England and Scotland); the convener of this committee is Dr. Johan Hjort, of the Norwegian Fisheries Department. The committee on over-fishing consists of one representative each of Germany, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands, and two of Great Britain (for England and Scotland), to whom will be added eventually one of Belgium. The convener of this committee is Mr. W. Garstang, of the Marine Biological Association.

A third committee for the investigation of the Baltic was also appointed, consisting of one representative each of Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, with Dr. Nordqvist as convener.

The "hydrographical," or, as we would rather term it, the purely oceanographical work of the international cooperation is to be carried out by means of the steamers provided by the participating States in accordance with the provisions of the Christiania programme. The representatives of the various countries handed in provisional schemes authorised by their Governments, the British scheme including two areas for research—the English Channel west of the Isle of Wight and the Færoe-Shetland Channel. The Dutch area includes the southern and the German area the northern half of the North Sea; the Danes undertake observations between Færoe and Iceland, the Norwegians observations in the western North Atlantic off the coast of Norway, and the Russians in the Arctic Sea. It is hoped that Belgium may undertake the eastern part of the English Channel. The countries possessing a coast-line on the Baltic divide that sea between them. The essential feature of the physical work consists of a simultaneous quarterly cruise by all the ships, employing instruments and methods of higher precision than have hitherto been thought necessary, and determining the horizontal and vertical distribution of temperature, salinity, dissolved gases and also of plankton. This does not, however, exhaust the programme, which provides for securing an extensive series of surface observations, and samples from regular liners crossing the North Sea and the Atlantic, and also aims at utilising lightships and coast-stations for regular observations at frequent intervals, in order to connect the various periodical cruises and so enable a continuous record of the march of seasonal change to be kept.

The International Council will conduct its work through the Central Bureau, which has now been established in Copenhagen, and the International Laboratory, to be opened in Christiania. The Bureau consists of the president, vice-president and general secretary of the Council, with the addition of Captain Drechsel, one of the Danish delegates, as an honorary member. It will exercise the executive authority of the Council, calling the annual or extraordinary meetings when required and keeping up communication with the various national organisations through the secretary, Dr. Hoek. The chief assistant in the Bureau is Dr. Martin Knudsen, lecturer on physics in the Polytechnic Institute of Copenhagen.

The International Laboratory at Christiania will be opened under Dr. Nansen, as honorary director, in the month of October, and Dr. Walfrid Ekman, of Stockholm, has been appointed first assistant, specially charged with the purely physical work; a second assistant for chemical work will be selected by Dr. Nansen at an early date. The work of the Laboratory, as defined in the Chris-

tiania programme, includes the instruction of observers, the verification of instruments, the preparation and distribution of standard sea-water for controlling analyses, and experiments with new apparatus.

As in all international undertakings, concessions have had to be made on all sides; but the proceedings at the Council were always harmonious, and there is good reason to expect that the various national organisations will cooperate heartily to obtain results which at the end of a few years may justify the experiment to the practical man engaged in fisheries as well as to the man of science.

H. R. M.

POLYNESIAN POLITICS AND ANTHROPOLOGY.¹

IN the course of a long residence in the South Pacific as a British official, Mr. Basil Thomson has from time to time published several amusing and instructive works, illustrative of native life and thought and the

book, however, and, to those who are interested in the well-being of the Pacific Islanders, the more pleasant part, is that which concerns the visit to Savage Island. The sovereignty of that island had been offered to Queen Victoria in 1887, and a protectorate so long ago as 1859. The island had been Christianised by the London Missionary Society, of whose missionaries, and particularly of Mr. Lawes, the resident missionary at the time of the proclamation, Mr. Thomson speaks in the highest terms. The natives were accordingly well-disposed towards the object of the visit; and the ceremony of proclamation of British supremacy was performed, and the protectorate flag hoisted, after the signature of a formal treaty, in the presence of a general assembly of the people, with their full assent.

Mr. Thomson took the opportunity of his visit to make inquiries into the history, customs and racial affinities of the natives. This was partly a business inquiry, for on coming under British rule certain changes in the law, particularly in the penal code, were requisite. It is only



FIG. 1.—A grave in Tonga.

problems with which a civilised Government has to deal. Not the least instructive, or the least amusing, of these was "The Diversions of a Prime Minister," issued in 1894. There the author recounted the difficulties which beset him in repairing the evils of the misgovernment of the Tonga Islands by Mr. Baker, formerly a Wesleyan missionary, and afterwards, as prime minister of the king, practically despot of the islands. The present volume narrates his experiences as commissioner for the purpose of taking over the suzerainty of Savage Island and Tonga consequent on the Samoa Convention with Germany, whereby these islands were assigned to Great Britain. So far as regards Tonga, therefore, it is a sort of sequel to the former work. The more important part of the

one example of the intimate connection between anthropological study and the practical politics of the widely extended British Empire. Fortunate it was for the Savage Islanders that an official so experienced in the ways of the Polynesian and Melanesian races, and so sympathetic, was found to undertake these delicate duties.

To enumerate the various subjects of scientific interest briefly discussed by Mr. Thomson would be to make a pretty long list. It must suffice to mention only three or four. The first is the physical and mental characteristics of the Niuéans. Polynesians they are, but Polynesians with a dash of alien blood which has rendered them less indolent, more alert and enterprising, than others of Polynesian race. Another subject is that of the historical value of tradition. The author cites a Niuéan tradition of a Tongan invasion, and sets beside it the Tongan account of apparently the same event, as well as an

¹ "Savage Island: an Account of a Sojourn in Niué and Tonga." By Basil Thomson. Pp. viii + 234. Illustrated. 7s. 6d. net. (London: John Murray.)